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منظمة الأمم المتحدة
للتربية والعلم والثقافة

联合国教育、
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UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION

3rd International Partnership Meeting

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Distinguished Guests and Colleagues,

Ladies and Gentleman,

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you to the third International Partnership Meeting.

This series of meetings aims to strengthen joint processes and coordination of freedom of expression and media development in countries around the world, and hereby contributes to what is at the heart of UNESCO's mandate.

Protecting the free flow of information is a cornerstone of UNESCO. Since its foundation UNESCO has placed freedom of expression and freedom of media at the core of its mission. Its Constitution, adopted in November 1945, states that UNESCO Member States will "collaborate in the work of advancing the mutual knowledge and understanding of peoples, through all means of mass communication and to that end recommend such

international agreements as may be necessary to promote the free flow of ideas by word and image”.

Since freedom of expression and the development of media are strongly associated, UNESCO also works in the field of Media Development. UNESCO endeavors to enhance the capacities of communication institutions, to improve the training of media professionals and to raise awareness among the public in making best use of communication resources, such as news agencies, [public service broadcasting](#) and [community media](#) in developing countries. UNESCO also assists media in improving the quality of their [local contents](#) by providing training, production and distribution opportunities.

Civic organizations are important partners for UNESCO, in order to successfully support both media development and freedom of expression which are inextricably linked. UNESCO benefits from their flexible international structure, their knowledge that arises from work in the field, from their direct contact with media and freedom of expression on a local level. Therefore UNESCO truly appreciates the cooperation with media support and press freedom advocacy organizations.

UNESCO, as lead UN agency for freedom of expression, is used to facilitate the coordination of media assistance between different actors. By this UNESCO may contribute to maintain the international partnership of media organizations, and their effective and common work by serving as coordinator and moderator whenever required. The maintenance of global collaboration in this field is indispensable since the media assistance has become a growing sector in international development cooperation strategies, and the perception of freedom of expression as a crucial element of democracy has grown as well. I would like to express my gratitude to IMS (The International Media Support) for its collaboration. As you know, UNESCO has been supportive to your efforts since the beginning of the process, and I would like to acknowledge your great contributions to make international cooperation in the field of freedom of expression and press freedom possible.

Freedom of expression and media development are imperative for development, democracy and dialogue. Without well-informed professional journalism, corruption and crime cannot be exposed, citizens cannot voice their interests, and societies cannot hope to implement the social and economic programmes of development

that are vital to their future prosperity. Well-protected, independent reporting is not a luxury on the development agenda – it is a cornerstone of any strategy designed to create open, accountable government in which citizens can put their trust.

On the other hand it is the obligation of states to ensure that there is what we can call an enabling environment for freedom of expression and free press. This includes a legal and regulatory framework according to international standards, capacity building for journalists and literacy campaigns. And there are still many obstacles to freedom of expression and free press. Let me just mention censorship, violence, intimidation and harassment of journalists, pressure and threats, poor working conditions, lack of financial resources and insufficient training.

But I think we have all come here today to try together to find ways through which we can make a difference and support the progress of media development and freedom of expression within our partnership countries.

UNESCO is committed to this endeavor and will provide its support to programmes and projects furthering this process and

ensuring its sustainability. The starting point of any long-term strategy to achieve structural stability for the media is a law guaranteeing freedom of expression and a pluralistic media landscape populated by independent media, print, broadcast, local, national, digital and analogue.

I wish you good and productive discussions and I am looking forward to the concrete outcomes, because I am convinced that they will be to the benefit of the three partnership countries, as well as the other countries whose development will be discussed during the next two days.

I can ensure you that UNESCO stands ready to assist its international partners in their activities.

Thank you for your attention.